



August 1, 2005

Street gang member charged with passport fraud

In conjunction with Operation Community Shield, U.S. Attorney targets gang members for prosecution

The United States Attorney has charged **Jose Alberto Alvarado** with passport fraud, alleging that he falsely claimed on a passport application that he is a U.S. citizen, when he is actually in the country illegally from El Salvador. According to an affidavit supporting the charge, Alvarado is a member of Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13), a violent street gang with roots in Central America.

United States Attorney Robert Clark Corrente announced a two-count complaint, which was filed on July 27 in U.S. District Court, Providence. He said the complaint is part of a "Zero Tolerance" policy toward street gangs in Rhode Island.

"By his own admission, the defendant is a veteran member of Mara Salvatrucha, a violent street gang that is trying to establish a strong presence in Rhode Island," U.S. Attorney Corrente said. "The fight against gang violence is a top priority of the Department of Justice under Attorney General Gonzales, and the U.S. Attorney's office is working closely with local, state and federal law enforcement agencies on this initiative. As these charges demonstrate, we will use every available tool to prosecute and incarcerate known gang members, to prevent them from taking root in this community."

According to an affidavit filed by an **Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)** agent, on March 28, 2003, Alvarado filed a passport application at the Providence Post Office,

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claiming to be a U.S. citizen from Puerto Rico named Ranciz Jose Bisbal. To support the application, Alvarado also filed identification documents in that name.

Post Office officials noted several fraud indicators in the application and referred it to the **State Department Diplomatic Security Service (DSS)** for investigation.

MS-13

According to the affidavit, Alvarado, who also goes by several aliases, is a “known and admitted member of the violent international street gang, Mara Salvatrucha (‘MS-13’), which has members and associated in the District of Rhode Island. The defendant has a tattoo on his right forearm which reads ‘MS-13.’”

As part of an anti-gang initiative called Community Shield, ICE agents arrested Alvarado last month on an administrative immigration violation. The U.S. Attorney’s office subsequently reviewed the evidence supporting the passport fraud charge and filed the complaint.

The complaint charges Alvarado with making a false statement on a passport application and falsely claiming to be a U.S. citizen. Alvarado, 25, whose address is not reflected in court records, is detained at the Wyatt Federal Detention Center, Central Falls, pending his appearance in U.S. District Court on the passport fraud charge. The charge is a felony and is therefore subject to review by a federal grand jury.

As part of Community Shield, ICE agents this month arrested 13 suspected gang members in Rhode Island on immigration violations. For additional information on Community Shield, contact the ICE Public Information Office at 617-565-4216.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard W. Rose, the District’s Anti-Gang Coordinator, is prosecuting the case.